



maineaudubon.org/loon
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What is *Loon Smart*?

Loon Smart builds upon the highly successful LakeSmart program. It provides an additional Award of Merit for campowners who meet additional standards that go beyond those required for the initial LakeSmart award. *Loon Smart* promotes awareness of loon habitat and conservation needs.

Loons are visual predators, so minimizing runoff and siltation to maintain water quality is critically important. Loons are also sensitive to disturbance, both on their lakeside nests and when raising their chicks. Being aware of where loons are, and keeping a good distance away will help minimize stress and allow loon parents to focus on the important job of raising their families. Boating can contribute to disturbance, and motor boats with large wakes can also wash loon eggs right out of nests. An awareness of the need for headway speed close to shore will help keep eggs safe in nests. Finally, the ingestion of lead tackle, particularly sinkers and jigs, is the leading cause of death of adult loons in Maine. Keeping tackle boxes “lead free” will reduce loon mortality in future years.

Being *Loon Smart* requires action that contributes to loon health, survival, reproduction and wellbeing.”



Who can be *Loon Smart*?

The *Loon Smart* Award of Merit is open to all persons whose properties have been certified or re-certified for the LakeSmart Award within 5 years of a Loon Smart Evaluation. Standards include both land use on the property as well as the practices and commitments of property owner(s).

Why Loon Smart?

Common Loons are long-lived birds with low levels of reproductive success. They lay two eggs each year in their lakeside nests, but only one out of every four chicks will survive to adulthood. After that, it is typically another seven years before they will begin to breed. Every breeding Common Loon on Maine's lakes and ponds therefore represents a huge investment of time, energy and experience that is not easy to replace.

Maine has the largest population of Common Loons in the northeast, with more than 4,000 individuals spending summers on our lakes and ponds, and many more wintering off our coast. Protecting water quality, reducing disturbance, minimizing predators and eliminating potential threats like lead tackle can contribute to enhancing loon habitat.

Loon Smart Standards:

1. Landscaping

Landscaping directs most or all stormwater runoff to a vegetated buffer, infiltration trench, rain garden or other "best management practice."

2. Shoreline vegetation buffer

The width and complexity of the shoreline vegetation buffer is maximized to the extent possible (three or more tiers of vegetation at least 10 feet wide)

3. Predators

Leave no outside attractions for egg predators (skunks, raccoons, ravens), such as pet food or unsecured trash.

4. Boating

- Keep from getting too close to loons. Get up-close views only with binoculars
- Maintain headway speed within 200 feet of the shore, in accordance with Maine law.
- Be cautious when boating (or swimming) near breeding loon pairs and young chicks, especially between June 15 and July 15 when chicks are most vulnerable.

5. Fishing with loons in mind

- "Fish Lead-Free" and remove lead tackle from tackle boxes.
- Properly dispose of monofilament line, including any found in lake or onshore.

6. Spread the word

Share information about *Loon Smart* with three or more other lake dwellers.

Partners:

